

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 0437

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE AZORES

REF: PONTA DELGADA 0435

1. SUMMARY: IN ISSUING ITS NOVEMBER 15 STATEMENT THE JUNTA PREEMPTED FLA BY EXERTING ITS LEADERSHIP OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS. THE LARGE DEMONSTRATIONS ALL OVER THE ARCHIPELEGO SHOWED BEYOND DOUBT THAT THE JUNTA HAS OVERWHELMING POPULAR SUPPORT. THE PPD ALSO EMERGED FROM THE DEMONSTRATIONS STRENGTHENED AND ITS LEADERS GAINED NEW STATURE FOR THEIR HANDLING OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN ADDITION TO THE DEMONSTRATIONS REPORTED REFTEL DEMONSTRATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE NOVEMBER 15 STATEMENT OF THE JUNTA REGIONAL WERE ALSO HELD ON THE ISLANDS OF FLORES AND CORVO. THE PRESS SAID HUNDREDS DEMONSTRATED ON FLORES AND DOZENS ON CORVO (POPULATION UNDER 400). THE CROWD IN ANGRA (POPULATION 20,000) WAS ABOUT 5,000 STRONG AND WE HAVE HEARD THAT ABOUT 5,000 PEOPLE DEMONSTRATED IN HORTA ON FAIAL. THE POPULATION OF FAIAL IS ABOUT 17,000.

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3. FLA ROLE: IN TERCIERA THE DEMONSTRATION WAS CALLED BY FLA,

WHICH MOVED QUICKER THAN THE PPD, BUT NO SLOGANS SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE WERE REPORTED. WE HAVE HEARD OF NO CHANTS FOR INDEPENDENCE AT ANY OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS EXCEPT THE ONE IN PONTA DELGADA. HERE ABOUT 200 FLA SUPPORTERS FOR INDEPENDENCE IN A CROWD NOW ESTIMATED TO BE BETWEEN FIVE AND SIX THOUSAND (DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF JUNE 6). PPD DEPUTY MOTA AMARAL AND OTHER PPD LEADERS ATTEMPTED TO DROWN OUT FLA WITH CHANTS SUPPORTING THE JUNTA. IT WAS CLEAR THAT MOST OF THE CROWD SUPPORTED THE PPD LEADERS. A NUMBER OF FLA SUPPORTERS STAYED AFTER THE DEMONSTRATION DEMANDING A REFERENDUM. A SMALL DELEGATION FROM FLA HEADED BY LUIS FRANCO TRIED TO CONVINCE THE JUNTA TO SUPPORT A REFERENDUM, BUT THE JUNTA REFUSED TO YIELD TO PRESSURE. IN THE END FLA LEADERS RETURNED TO THEIR SUPPORTERS WITH A STATEMENT THAT THE JUNTA WAS WORKING TO RESTRUCTURE THE GOVERNMENT IN THE AZORES, WHICH DID NOT SATISFY FLA MEMBERS. ANGRY WORDS WERE EXCHANGED BETWEEN THE FLA LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORTERS.

4. REACTIONS: THE JUNTA REGIONAL HAS RECEIVED ABOUT FIFTY TELEGRAMS OF SUPPORT FROM MUNICIPALITIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE ARCHIPELEGO. THE SOCIALIST PARTY DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS ON MOST OF THE ISLANDS (IT DID JOIN THE PPD IN CONVOKING ONE OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS ON PICO) BECAUSE IT THOUGHT THEY WOULD BE MANIPULATED BY FLA. HOWEVER, A SOCIALIST LEADER IN PONTA DELGADA TOLD US THE PS SUPPORTS THE JUNTA. PPD LEADERS BELIEVE THEIR PARTY HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED BY THE LARGE NUMBERS (FOR THE AZORES) WHICH TURNED OUT FOR THE DEMONSTRATIONS, ALL OF WHICH WERE CONVOKED BY THE PPD EXCEPT FOR THE ONES ON TERCEIRA AND CORVO. THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES HERE HAVE CONGRADULATED PPD LEADERS FOR THEIR HANDLING OF THE DEMONSTRATION IN PONTA DELGADA.

5. COMMENT: THE LARGE CROWDS WHICH TURNED OUT TO SUPPORT THE JUNTA FROM ONE END OF THE ARCHIPELEGO TO THE OTHER ARE UNIQUE IN AZOREAN EXPERIENCE AND SHOWED BEYOND DOUBT THAT THE JUNTA HAS OVERWHELMING POPULAR SUPPORT. IN ISSUING ITS COMMUNIQUE THE JUNTA NOT ONLY REAFFIRMED ITS SUPPORT FOR THE SIXTH GOVERNMENT, BUT PREEMPTED FLA BY EXERTING ITS LEADERSHIP OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE FLA HAS BEEN UPSTAGED IS ILLUSTRATED BY A COMMENT MAKING THE ROUNDS IN SAO
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MIGUEL: PEOPLE SAY THAT THEY NOW KNOW WHO FLA IS - IT IS THE JUNTA. THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF TRUTH IN THIS OBSERVATION IN THAT THE JUNTA STATEMENT WAS SIMILAR TO THE POSITION OF THE MODERATE FLA. IN PONTA DELGADA, THE RIGHT WING FLA FACTION ACHIEVED NO GLORY. ALTHOUGH IT MADE A LOT OF NOISE, IT NEVER HAD THE MAJORITY OF THE CROWD WITH IT AND IT ENDED THE DAY WITH PUBLIC BICKERING BETWEEN ITS LEADERS AND SUPPORTERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PPD LEADERS, PARTICULARLY MOTA AMARAL,

GAINED NEW STATURE FOR THEIR SKILLFUL HANDLING OF THE DEMON-
STRATION.
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